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To the Maior, Aldermen, and Inhabitants of N.



That which heretofore I have propounded to you (right Worshipfull and beloued) in teaching, I do now publish to all men by printing, to wit, mine opinion of the vnlawfulness of games consisting in chance. My desire is either information, if I erre in iudgement, or reformation of so leud a practise. But whether I erre or no (which yet I would gladly vnderstand, for I ought not to teach an vtruth, though to Gods glorie) yet there is none, zealous indeed against sinne, desirous from the heart to reclaim sinners, and who deeply considereth the grieuous abuses, which accompanie dicing and carding (as horrible swearing, dangerous quarrelling, losse (I say not of good houres, but) of nights and dayes, and the pittifull vndoing of too too manie) but will remembre that * all things are not expedient, which are lawfull, and therefore abstaine from such Heathenish passe-times, that, if by their example they cannot reforme, they may be sure * they do not confirme gamesters in their inordinate walking. Which respect, the 7. Iniunction forbidding Ministers to vse these vnlawfull games, may be supposed to haue. Now that which authoritie exacteth of Ministers, doth Religion require of all true Professours. For as the one are to be * ensamples to the flocke, so the other are to be * lights in the world. And therefore as PAVL saith, * If meat offend my brother, I will eate no flesh while the world standeth. So euerie true Chistian should say, and that with more resolution (for Play is not so necessarie as meat) If play offend my brother, who seeing me hauing knowledge, play, is boldned to follow gaming, I will not play while the world standeth. Which care vnto edification if all, who haue the * word in their mouthes, and would not be thought to hate to be reformed, would manifest in their conuersation, and if Magistrates, who should not * carie the sword in vaine, would do what they may by * law, to banish these forbidden past-times, or rather lost-times, I doubt not, but that preaching and writing against them would more mightily preuaile, and this good would come of it, manie would applie themselves to better exercises, there would be lesse time mispent in Alehouses, and God lesse prouoked to displeasure against vs. But these things I referre to the consideration of the wise and this my Dialogue to the iudgement of the Godly, chiefly to you, whose good I wish especially. Farewell.

A Dialogue against playing at Cardes and Tables.



If howsoever I am perswaded by that which I reade in the common places of Peter Martir, Par. 2. pag. 525. b. that Dice (condemned both by the Ciuill lawes, and by the Fathers) are therfore vnlawfull, because they depend vpon chance: yet not satisfied with that which he writeth of Table-playing, pag. 526. b. I would craue your opinion concerning playing at Tables and Cards.

Preacher. Sauing the iudgement of so excellent a Diuine, so far as I can learne out of Gods word, Cards and Tables seeme to me no more lawfull (though lesse offensive) the dice. For Table-playing is no whit the more lawfull, because Plato compares the life of man therunto, then a thiefe is the more iustifiable, because Christ compareth his second comming, to Burglarie in the night. Mat. 24. 43. 44. Again, if Dice be wholly euill, because they wholly depend vpon chance, then Tables and Cards must needs be somewhat euill, because they somewhat depend vpon chance. Therfore consider well this reason, which condemneth the one as well as the other: Lots are not to be vsed in sport, but games consisting in chance, as dice, cards, Tables, are lots, therfore not to be vsed in sport.

Profes. For my better instruction, proue that Lots are not to be vsed in sport.

Preach. Consider with regard these three things: first, that we read not in the Scriptures that Lots were vsed but only in serious matters both by the Jewes. Ios. 18. 10. and Gentiles Ion. 1. 7. Secondly, that a Lot in the nature thereof doth as necessarily suppose the speciall prouidence and determining presence of God as an oth in the nature thereof doth suppose the testifying presence of God. Psa. 138. 18. (as in an oth) so in a Lot prayer is expressed or to be vnderstood, 1. Sam. 14. 41. Thirdly, that the proper end of a Lot (as of an oth, Heb. 6. 16.) is to end a controuersie, and therfore for your better instruction examine these reasons. Whatsoever directly, or of it selfe, or in a speciall manner, tendeth to the aduancing of the name of God, is to be vsed religiously, Mal. 1. 6. 7. and not to be vsed in sport: as we are not to pray or sweare in sport, Exod. 20. 7. Esa. 29. 13. 1er. 4. 2. but the vse of Lots, directly of it selfe and in a speciall manner tendeth to aduancing of the name of God, in attributing to his speciall prouidence in the whole and immediate disposing of the Lot, and expecting the euent, Pro. 16. 33. Act. 1. 24. 26. Therfore the vse of Lots is not to be in sport. Again, we are not to tempt the Almighty by a vaine desire of manifestation of his power and speciall prouidence, Psa. 78. 18. 19. Esa. 7. 12. Mat. 4. 6. 7. But by vsing Lots in sport we tempt the Almighty, vainly desiring the manifestation of his speciall prouidence in his immediate disposing, Therfore, &c. Lastly, whatsoever God hath sanctified to a proper end, is not to be peruered to a woyle, Mat. 21. 12. 13. But God hath sanctified Lots to a proper end, namely to end controuersies, Num. 26. 55. Pro. 18. 18. therfore man is not to peruert them to a woyle: namely to play, and by playing to get away another mans money, which without controuersie is his owne. For the common saying is, Sine lucro frigit lusus, no gaining, cold gaming.

Profes. God hath sanctified Psalmes to the praise of his name, and bread and wine to represent the body and blood of our crucified Saviour, which be holy ends: and the children of God may sing Psalmes to make themselves merie in the Lord, and feed vpon bread and wine not onely for necessity but to cheare themselves. Why then may not Gods Children recreate themselves by lottery not withstanding God hath sanctified the same to end a controuersie?

Preach. Because we find not in the scriptures any dispensation for recreation by lotterie as we do for godly mirth by singing, Iam. 5. 13. and for religious and sober chearing our selues by eating and drinking, Deut. 8. 9. 10. And therfore (it being withall considered that the ends you speake of, be not proper, though holy) it followeth, that God who only disposeth the Lot touching the euent, and is therfore a principall actor, is not to be set on woyle by lotterie in any case but when he dispenseth with vs, or giueth vs leave so to do: But dispensation for recreation by lotterie cannot be shewed, Therfore, &c.

Profes. Lots may be vsed for profit in a matter of right, Num. 26. 55. Why not for pleasure?

Preach. Then othes may be vsed for pleasure, for they may for profit, in a matter of truth, Exod. 22. 8. 11. But indeed lots (as othes) are not to be vsed either for profit or pleasure, but only to end a controuersie.

Profes. The wit is exercised by Tables and Cards, therfore they be no lots.

Preach. Yet Lotterie is vsed by casting Dice, and by shuffling and cutting, before the wit is exercised. But how doth this follow? Because Cards & Tables be not naked Lots, consisting only in chance (as Dice) they are therfore no lots at all. Although (being vsed without cogging, or packing) they consist principally in chance, from whence they are to receive denomination. In which respect a Lot is called in Latin Sorts, that is, chance or hazard. And Lyr upon Prou. 16. saith, To vse Lots, is, by a variable euent of some sensible thing, to determine some doubtful or vncertaine matter, as to draw cuts, or to cast Dice. But whether you will call Cards and Tables Lots, or no, you play with chance or vse Lotterie. When consider whether exercise of wit both sanctifie playing with lotterie, or playing with lotterie make such exercising of wit a sin, Hag. 2. 13. 14. For as calling God to witness by vaine swearing is a sinne, 2. Cor. 1. 12 so making God an vmpier, by playing with lotterie must needs be a sin: yea, such a sin as maketh the offender (in some respects) more blame-worthy. For there be no occasions of swearing then of lotterie. Secondly, vaine othes most commonly slip out at vnawares, whereas Lots cannot be vsed but with deliberation. Thirdly, swearing is to satisfie other whereas this kind of lotterie is altogether to fulfill our own lusts. Therfore take heed, that you be not guilty of peruerding the ordinance of the Lord, of taking the name of God in vaine, & of tempting the Almighty, by a gamesome putting off things to hazard, and making play of lotterie, except you thinke that God hath no gouernment in vaine actions, or hath dispensed with such lewd games.

Profes. In shooting there is a chaunce by a sodaine blast, yet shooting is no lotterie.

Preach. It is true: for that chance cometh by accident, and not of the nature of the game, to be vsed.

Profes. Lots are secret, and the whole disposing of them is of God, Psa. 16. 33. but it is otherwise in Tables and Cards.

Preach. Lots are cast into the lap by man, and the secret should be suspected: but the disposing of the chance is secret, that it may be chaunce indeed, and wholly of God, who directeth all things, Pro. 16. 33. 34. So in Tables, man by faire casting Dice truly made, and in Cards, by shuffling and cutting, doth openly dispose the Dice and Cards so, as whereby a variable euent may follow: but it is onely and immediatly of God that the Dice be so cast, and the Cards so shuffled and cut, as that this or that game followeth, except there be cogging and packing. So that in faire play mans wit is not exercised in disposing the chance, but in making the best of it being past.

Profes. The end of our play is recreation, and not to make God an vmpier: but recreation (no doubt) is lawfull.

Preach. It may be the souldiers had no such end when they cast lots for Christ his coat, Mat. 27. 25. but this should be your end when you vse lotterie, as the end of an oth should be, to call God to witness. Therfore as swearing, so lotterie, without due respect is sinne. Again, howsoever recreation be your pretended end, yet remembre that we must not do euill that good may come of it, Rom. 3. 8. And that therfore we are to recreate our selues by lawfull recreations. Then see how Cards and Tables be lawfull.

Profes. If they be not abused by swearing or bawling, playing for too long time, or too much money.

Preach. Though I am perswaded that it is not lawfull to play for any money, considering thanks cannot be giuen in faith for that which is so gotten, Deut. 23. 18. Esa. 61. 8. Gamesters woyle not with their hands the thing that is god, to be frs from stealing, Eph. 4. 28. and the loser hath not an answerable benefite for his money so lost, Gen. 29. 15. contrarie to that equitie which Aristotle by the light of nature hath taught long since, Eth. 1. 5. c. 4. yet I grant that Cardes and Tables so vsed as you speake, be lesse sinfull, but how they be lawfull I see not yet.

Profes. God men and well learned vse them.

Preach. We must liue by precepts, not by examples, except they be vndoubtedly good. Therfore examine whether they be good, and well learned in so doing or no. For euerie man may erre, Rom. 3. 4.

Profes. It is not god to be too iust, or too wise, Eccl. 7. 18.

Preach. It is not god to be too wicked or too foolish, Eccl. 7. 19. in despising the word of God, Pro. 1. 22. and not regarding the weaknesse of other, Rom. 14. 21. Let vs therfore beware that we loue not pleasure more then Godlinesse, 2. Tim. 3. 4.

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